



Understanding the Alphabet Soup:

Key terms for
Children's
Behavioral
Health

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APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA): ABA is a specialized therapy that is used with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It can help increase language and communication skills and improve attention, focus, memory, and social skills.

ASSESSMENT: an assessment is like a test that a behavioral health professional will do with your child to better understand what they are thinking and feeling.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: is how your child thinks and feels about their emotions. This can mean both mental health and/or drug and alcohol use. Behavioral health can range from behaviors and signs that you notice in your home to a medical disorder that can be diagnosed by a professional.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENING: a screening is also like a test to better understand what your child is thinking and feeling. It is different from an assessment because it can be done without a behavioral health professional. Your child can take a screening themselves or you can take a screening on behalf of your child.

CRISIS: a behavioral health crisis is when your child is experiencing extreme stress and is behaving in a way that is dangerous to themselves and/or others. When your child is in urgent need of behavioral health there are crisis services that you can get in an emergency.

CONSENT: parents or caregivers for children under 14 have to agree (provide consent) for their child to get a service. Children over 14 have the right to consent for themselves or decline recommended services.

COUNSELING/THERAPY: counseling/therapy is what you would imagine when you think of talk therapy. This is one-on-one treatment between a behavioral health professional and your child, in a private space, where they will talk about feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. There are many forms of counseling/therapy, but most involve developing a trusting relationship between the professional and the child, and can include play, art, music, or talking.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP): a legal document that describes the plan for your child's educational program, including academic performance levels (grades), goals, and other services that they will receive through the school. Your child must have an IEP to receive behavioral health support in school paid for through Medicaid/medical assistance.

INTENSIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (IBHS): IBHS is a full range of support for your child that can happen in the school, your home, or your neighborhood delivered day to day. The support is provided by an organization that is assigned to your child's school. IBHS is a team approach from a group of specialists:

- **Behavioral Consultant:** a member of the IBHS team who works with you, your loved ones, and your child to develop the treatment plan. The Behavioral Consultant can work with you and your child at home, at school, or in the community.
- **Mobile Therapist:** a member of the IBHS team who works with you, your loved ones, and your child to provide the services outlined in the treatment plan. The Mobile Therapist can work with you and your child at home, at school, or in the community.

- **Behavioral Health Technician:** a member of the IBHS team who will work with your child to deliver services day-to-day. The Behavioral Health Technician can work with you and your child at home, at school, or in the community.
- **Care Coordinator:** this team member will work with you, your child, and other professionals at your child's school to manage services and care for your child.
- **Family Support Specialist/Family Peer Specialist:** this is a person with experience in finding services and supports for their child who can help you navigate the complicated system and advocate for you and your family's best interests.

KOOTH is a digital mental health platform that provides accessible counseling and mental health support for middle and high school students. The service has been made available to the District at no cost to students or parents.

MEDICAID – ALSO KNOWN AS MEDICAL ASSISTANCE:

Medicaid or Medical Assistance (MA) provides health insurance coverage to millions of Americans, including low-income adults, children, pregnant people, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. Even if you have commercial/private health insurance, your child could be eligible for Medicaid if they have a behavioral health challenge. Community Behavioral Health is the Behavioral Health Managed Care Organization in Philadelphia that oversees the Medicaid coverage for you and your family's behavioral health treatment.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS): the broad system of support that focuses on positive experiences for children in the Philadelphia School District. The schools use proven practices to offer different levels of support that meets the needs of students to support their feelings, emotions, and academics.

- **Tier One:** all students in the school learn basic school-wide norms and expectations like respect, kindness, and academic success
- **Tier Two:** When students have a hard time with behaviors, schools can offer additional interventions for students who need more support. For example, if your child is struggling with social interactions, they might get help with social interactions in a small group of their peers.
- **Tier Three:** this level offers individualized support to help students with ongoing concerns.

OUTPATIENT SATELLITE IN SCHOOLS: The outpatient satellite programs are when an outside behavioral health agency is located within your child's school to offer one-on-one therapy for your child in the school setting.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS (PBIS): a district-wide approach that promotes positive school safety and good behavior among all students. PBIS is not a program or a curriculum. It is a team of school employees focused on creating a safe and fun environment in schools. By supporting positive behaviors, PBIS builds a learning environment where teachers and students can be their best.

PSYCHIATRIST: a psychiatrist is different from a therapist or counselor. A psychiatrist has a medical license, like a doctor/pediatrician, and can prescribe medications for your child. Psychiatrists are not available in school. You can access psychiatry services through your community mental health organization.

REFERRAL: to access behavioral health support, you may need a referral. A referral is usually made by a school counselor or behavioral health professional who has talked with your child to determine the type of support they need.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: a process that teaches students how to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. Through safe and supportive spaces in the schools, students can meet to talk, ask questions, and discuss their grievances in ways that all parties feel comfortable and acknowledged.

SAFETY PLAN: this is a tool that might be used by your child's behavioral health support team. A Safety Plan is a written list of coping strategies and sources of support that your child can use before or during a behavioral health crisis.

SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES/SUPPORTS: this is any type of behavioral health support that is offered in your child's school. This can range from screening to assessment to outpatient to intensive behavioral health services.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR: the school counselor(s) is responsible to help students and families with academic goals, college and career goals, and social and emotional goals. They are the best contact for you to talk with to learn more about your child's behaviors and challenges and get the right help for them.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL): this program teaches students how to manage their emotions, make good decisions, and work with other children on a team. They learn critical thinking, emotion management, conflict resolution, decision making, and teamwork so that children value themselves and others.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: SAP providers are a team of experts assigned to your child's school. The SAP providers can help your child overcome issues like tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, or mental health that threaten their ability to succeed in the classroom. School Counselors can refer your child to a SAP provider

SUPPORT TEAM FOR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (STEP): STEP is a team of mental health professionals who may be appointed to your child's school. Check if your child's school has a STEP team. The Team is appointed to provide assessments around needs related to mental health, which can include individual and/or group counseling sessions, case management, and family/peer engagement.

THERAPIST/COUNSELOR: a therapist is different from the school counselor. A therapist is not an employee of the school, and their only job is to give your child behavioral health support.

SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE ORGANIZED INTO TIERS AS ILLUSTRATED BELOW:

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS)
Restorative Justice
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

TIER 2: INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Universal BH Screening Pending
Student Assessment Program (SAP)
Support Team for Educational
Partnerships (STEP)

**TIER 3: INTENSIVE
SUPPORT**

Outpatient Satellites in
Schools
Support Team for
Educational
Partnerships
(STEP)
Intensive
Behavioral
Health
Services
(IBHS)

TREATMENT PLAN: no matter what services your child gets, there will be some form of a treatment plan involved. A treatment plan is a document that helps guide the services your child gets and sets goals for their behaviors. This plan should be made collaboratively with you and your child and the person or team that provides the services.

THE SERVICES BELOW MAY BE AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN BUT ARE NOT OFFERED IN SCHOOLS.

ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT HOSPITAL: this is designed to meet the needs of children whose behaviors and emotions present a risk to themselves and/or others. Children who need inpatient care usually experience extreme stress and are not functioning to their fullest potential.

CASE MANAGEMENT: a service that will meet you and your family in your home or in the community that can help you get the services you need or keep track of services and appointments. There are different kinds of case management, called Blended Case Management, Enhanced Case Management, or Specialized Blended Case Management. The service is best if you are having trouble getting your child the help they need while also juggling everything else in your life.

CRISIS SERVICES:

- **Children's Mobile Crisis Team:** this is a short-term (72 hour) service that will meet your child where they are (home, school, community) to resolve a crisis situation. The goal is to resolve the crisis and keep your child at home, rather than needing to go to a hospital or other intensive level of care.

- **Crisis Mobile Intervention Services:** this is a service your child can receive after being evaluated by the Children's Mobile Crisis Team or at the Crisis Response Center. The service will meet your child where they are (home, school, community) to build skills and resolve behaviors after a mental health crisis. They will meet with your child 2–3 times per week for only a few weeks and make recommendations for what other services your child could get after the crisis has been resolved.
- **Crisis Stabilization Services/Children's Crisis Response Center:** this is like an emergency room for a mental health crisis. You can bring your child to the crisis response center to gain immediate access to crisis services.

FAMILY-BASED SERVICES (FBS): this is a more intensive service for families that includes case management services, family treatment, and individual treatment for your child. Parents or participating adults are considered part of the treatment team. This service is used when family context issues (like divorce, incarceration, etc.) are affecting your child's behaviors.

HI-FIDELITY WRAPAROUND: this is a joint planning team that works with you and your child to link to supports. The team includes youth and family peer support.

OUTPATIENT TREATMENT (INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, GROUP): this is what you would imagine when you think of talk therapy. This is one-on-one treatment between a behavioral health professional and your child, in a private space, where they will talk about feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

There are many forms of counseling/therapy, but most involve developing a trusting relationship between the professional and the child, and can include play, art, music, or talking.

PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION PROGRAM (PHP): is a day treatment program for children with serious mental illness. Instead of school, your child would attend the PHP Monday through Friday for a short time period (usually less than 20 days) and come home each day. This service is usually used after a child has been hospitalized as a "step-down" to return to the home and community.

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